Salt Lake City Hall (Council Hall)
300 North State Street
Salt Lake
Salt Lake County
UTAH

HABS No. UT-74

P H O T O G R A P H S

WRITTEN AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
WASHINGTON,D.C. 20240

COUNCIL HALL

Name: The Original name is Salt Lake City Hall. The present (common) name is Council Hall. This is a National Historic Landmark.

Location: 300 North State Street is the present location. The original location was on First South Street near State Street in Salt Lake City.

Present Owner: State of Utah

Present Occupant: Utah State Travel Council

Present Use: Administrative Offices and State Tourist Bureau

Significance:

Constructed between 1864 and 1866 as Salt Lake City's government headquarters, Salt Lake City Hall was one of the earliest buildings to house the City's public officials and municipal functions.

Since the building also served as the Utah Territorial Capitol where both the federally appointed Territorial Governor and the Mormon-dominated legislature met until 1894, much of the struggle for political control of Utah took place in the 60-foot-square, two-story red sandstone building. The building documents what historian Howard Roberts Lamar aptly describes as "the most turbulent and unusual experience in the history of the American Territorial system," referring to the forty years of Morman-Gentile political conflict which preceded Utah's statehood in 1896. According to historian Eugene E. Campbell, "Polygamy and theocratic domination of the civil government led to serious confrontation with federally appointed territorial officials and were primary reasons that Utah's statehood applications were denied for over forty years. Friction began when the first territorial appointees arrived in Utah in 1851, and it reached a climax in 1857 when U.S. President James Buchanan felt obliged to send an army of 2,500 men to install

a non-Mormon governor and to quell a reported Mormon rebellion against the government." After several more decades of struggling with accommodation to secular, political economic and social pressures, Utah became the 45th American State in 1896.

Historical Information:

A. Physical History

1. Date of Erection: The building was erected between 1864 and 1866.
2. Architect: William H. Folsom
3. Builder, contractor, suppliers: The builder is unknown.
4. Original plans and construction: See "Architectural Information."
5. Alterations and Additions:[1]

Structurally, the restored Salt Lake City Hall differs from the original building as it was located on First South and State Streets in two ways: first, a small basement has been added for additional storage space, and secondly, a sawed sandstone apron has been constructed around the exterior.

B. Historical Context:[2]

History

Members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (Mormons) began fleeing from persecution in the east and settling in Utah in 1847. Under the leadership of Brigham Young, they soon transformed much of the Great Basin into green farm land and formed their own body politic, the State of Deseret. In 1850, Congress designated the area Utah Territory, and President Millard Fillmore named Young as governor. Non-Mormon territorial appointees began arriving in Utah in 1851.

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1 From the National Register Form.
2 Ibid.

Young had no intention of allowing outsiders to disrupt the Saints' theocratic society. Accordingly, before the non-Mormon appointees arrived, the governor put the machinery of territorial government in motion. He convened the legislature and called for immediate election of a delegate to Congress, and as ex-officio Superintendent of Indian Affairs, he exerted full control over all Indian business. In addition the all-Mormon legislature empowered probate judges to hear criminal and civil cases handled ususally in federal courts. Through these and similar measures, Young exercised almost absolute rule in Utah from 1851 to 1858. The territory's frustrated federal officials protested to Washington but received little satisfaction.

Meanwhile, a combination of events, both in Salt Lake City and the National Capitol, made it impossible for Fillmore's successor, James Buchanan, to ignore the Utah problems. In 1852 Young had announced publicly that Mormons believed in and practiced the doctrine of plural wives. For a time this belief received little notice outside Utah, but gradually other Americans became aware of it. Most considered the idea barbaric and in 1856, the newly formed Republican Party promised to abolish polygamy as well as slavery.

During this same year the struggle for judicial supremacy in Utah worsened. A series of natural disasters and economic failures had befallen the Mormons in recent months, and to supplement their incomes, numerous Saints began to accept jury duty and volunteer as witnesses in federal courts. After Young deplored this cooperation from the pulpit, the Mormons launched into a fervent reformation to weed out the weak among them. This agitated relations with federal officials still further. Fights erupted in courtrooms, and the surveyor general and an Indian agent reported that they could not perform their duties because Utah was in a state of rebellion.

Due to the slavery crisis and the related issue of States rights, Buchanan was reluctant to interfere in Utah. On the other hand, he felt it necessary to remind the Mormons that they remained under American rule. Therefore, in 1857, the President dispatched 2,500 troops, one-sixth of the entire U. S. Army, to restore federal supremacy in the recalcitrant territory. The task proved difficult, for short of engaging U.S. troops in battle, the Saints used every means available to delay military occupation of their desert haven. Eventually, after the passage of almost a year and the expenditure of an estimated $15,000,000, the Army forced Young to acquiesce. Buchanan appointed a new Governor, Alfred W. Cumming, and federal soldiers remained in the territory.

Although the military conflict ended, Mormons did not cease their opposition to federal authority. Still dominating the legislature, they enlarged the jurisdiction of probate courts, passed laws to prevent the inclusion of Utah land in the public domain, and continued to levy taxes for the support of church schools and the Nauvoo Legion, a church militia. From time to time, various governors and judges revived public debate on these issues, but none of them created as much controversy as polygamy.

The first significant federal attack against the doctrine of plural wives came in 1862. After failing in two earlier attempts, Representative Justin R. Morrill of Vermont secured congressional approval of a bill subjecting polygamists to a $500 fine and up to 5 years imprisonment. The Morrill Act proved ineffective, however, because local probate courts refused to hear polygamy cases and because President Abraham Lincoln's administration was preoccupied with the more pressing problem of civil war. Ouring the next decade, several congressmen introduced stronger antipolygamy measures, but they did not pass.

By 1873, the issue had gained national attention again, and this time the legal battle centered on Utah's judicial system. With enactment of the Poland Bill in 1874, Congress increased the responsibilities and powers of the U. S. Marshal in the territory and required all juries there to be half-Gentile and half-Mormon. These provisions placed the first effective limitations on Utah probate courts, but the Saints continued to practice polygamy. Consequently, non-Mormons pressed for more stringent legislation. Particularly vociferous were lawyers and federal appointees who found their personal, economic, and political ambitions frustrated by Mormon cooperatives and the extension of suffrage to church women.

A persistent anti-Mormon press in the East and a disputed Utah delegate election in 1880 revived congressional interest in the territory. Drawing upon the precedent of regulatory measures directed at the defeated South after the Civil War, the National Legislature moved to reconstruct Utah's political and social institutions. In the Edmunds Bill of 1882, Congress reaffirmed the earlier Morrill Act, denied polygamists the right to vote and hold public office, and created a five-man Utah Commission to supervise voter registration and elections. During the next 4 years, federal courts heard a record number of polygamy cases, while the Utah Commission interviewed thousands of voters. In 1887, the Edmunds-Tucker Act dealt a final blow to the Mormon theocracy. This statute limited Utah's probate courts to estate and guardianship cases, provided that probate judges be appointed by the President, required Utah voters to take a qualifying oath, dissolved the LDS Church as an incorporated body, and broke up the Perpetual Emigrating Company and the Nauvoo Legion.

Under the threat of still other restrictive legislation, the church agreed in 1890 to forbid plural marriage. In addition, it disbanded the

Mormon political organization or People's Party. Congress passed the Utah Enabling Act in 1892, and 4 years later the territory became the 45th American State.

Architect William H. Folsom designed Council Hall for use as a municipal government building. Construction began at the corner of First South and State Streets in 1864, and reached completion in 1866. From then until 1894, the structure provided office space for Salt Lake City officials and served as Utah's Territorial Capitol as well. City police enjoyed exclusive use of the hall from the mid 1890's until 1915, when it became the home of the municipal Board of Health.

In 1948, David O. McKay, President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, guided development of plans to restore the building. The church secured land directly across from the State Capitol and furnished approximately $300,00 to finance movement of Council Hall about one mile to the new site. Architect Edward O. Anderson supervised the dismantling and restora tion work in 1961-1962. Presently the building is the home of the Utah Travel Council.

Part II: Architectural Information

A. Description of the Exterior:[3] (from the National Register Form)

Salt Lake City Hall is a 60-foot-square, two story structure of randomly laid red sandstone and contrasting white woodwork. It is seven bays wide and five bays deep. On the lower front facade, there are six stationary, 30-pane widows and a centrally located double door flanked by side lights. On the

[3] From the National Register Form.

upper level, immediately above the main entrance, double glass doors open onto a small balustraded balcony supported by pendant-ornamented brackets. The six upper level windows are 12-over-12 sash, and each is topped by a broken pediment of stone. Side and rear windows are 12-over-12 sash too, but they are topped by smooth sandstone lintels.

A three part wooden entablature extends around the top of Council Hall, and scroll brackets support the cornice and a railing. An octagon-shaped cupola with a square, balustraded base sits astride the copper-covered hip roof. The cupola dome and small spire are copper also. Two interior metal chimneys pierce the roof near the northeast and southwest corners.

B. Description of the Interior:[4]

Inside the building a 10 foot-wide central hall runs the length of the first story. Large paneled doors with transoms and shouldered architrave trim lead into a visitor information center and a storage room on the left and a period room and conference area on the right. Four inch wide oak planks with simulated wooden pegs cover the floors throughout. Walls and ceilings are finished in plaster and painted variously in white, yellow, green, blue, and pink.

A dog-leg stair with turned balusters leads from the corridor to the upper story, where there are two offices, a large courtroom, and the council room. The latter measures approximately 35 by 45 feet, contains period furniture, and features an elaborate plaster cornice. Adjacent to this room is the original mayor's office which is furnished with period pieces too.

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[4] From the National Register Form.

C. Site:

The building has been moved from its original site in the Central Business District to a location south of the Utah State Capitol Building see History section). It faces north and looks toward the Capitol. It is somewhat isolated, surrounded by grass with an adjacent parking lot to accommodate visitors and tourists.

III. Sources of Information:

A. Drawings:

B. Early views: A photograph of the building in its original location occurs in The Valley of the Great Salt Lake, published by the Utah State Historical Society, 1959, page 261.

D. Bibliography:

1. Primary Sources:

2. Secondary Sources:

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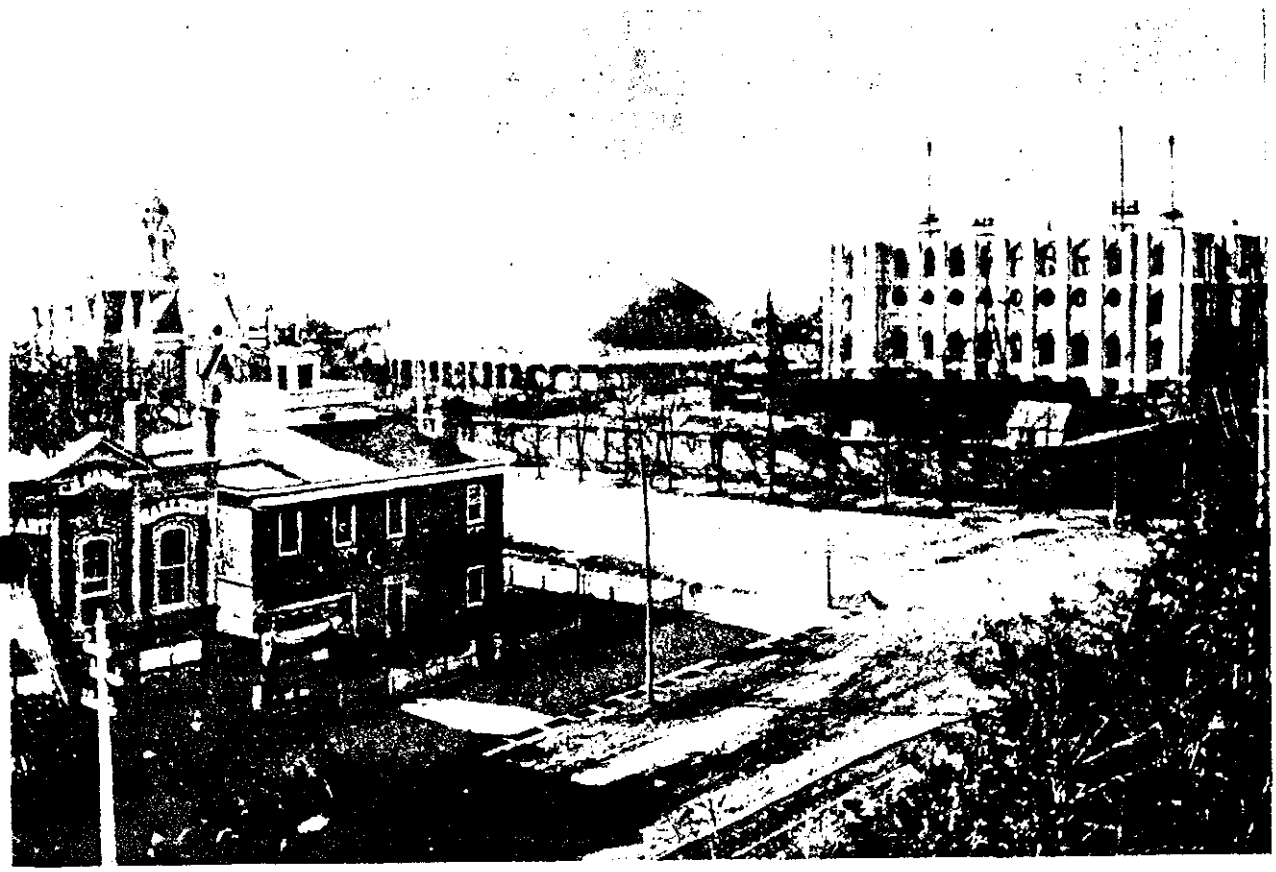
Campbell, Eugene E. in Utah's History, Richard D. Poll, Editor, BYU Press Provo, 1978.

This document prepared by Linda Edeiken,ACIP,preservation planner,Salt Lake City Planning Department,based on National Register nomination



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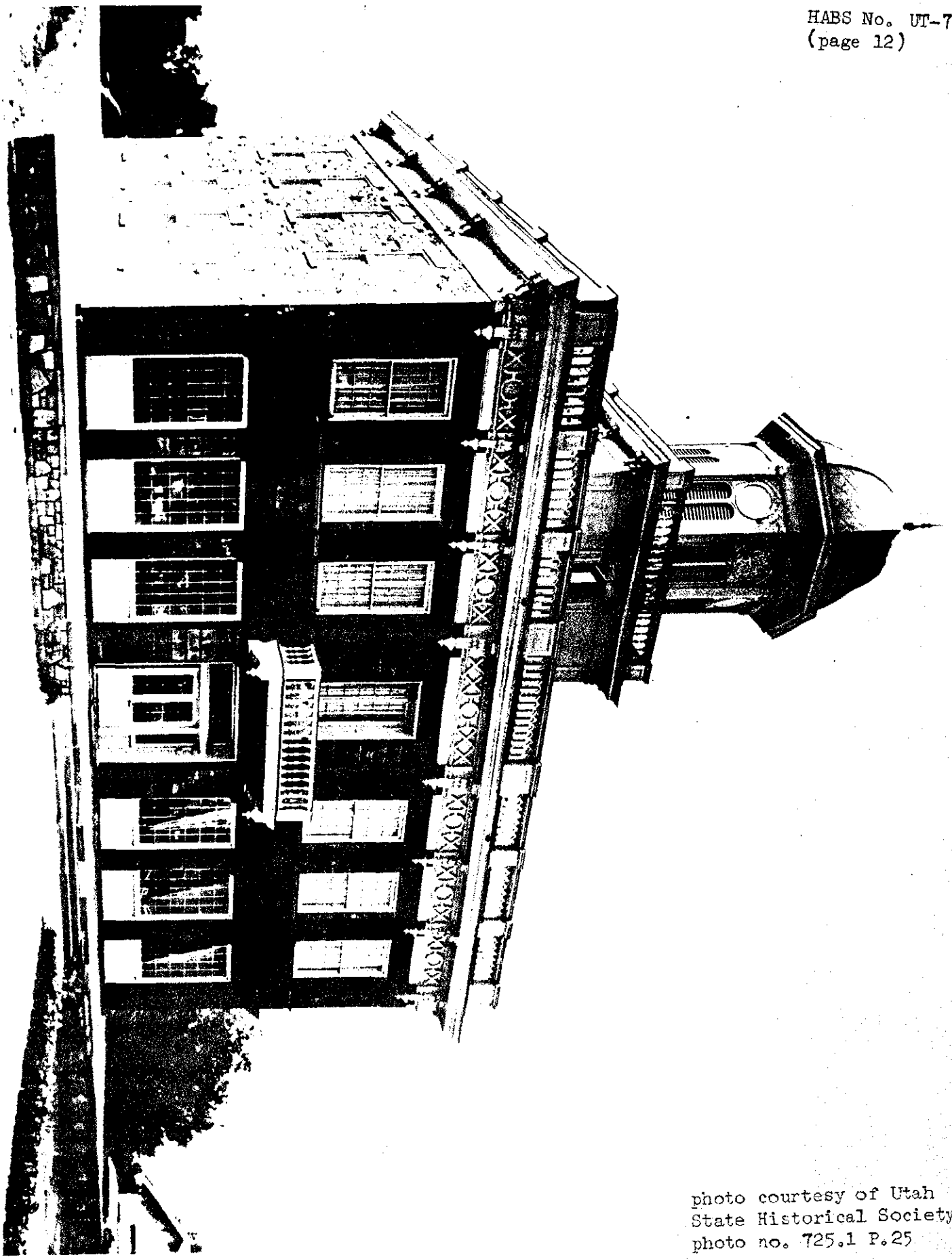

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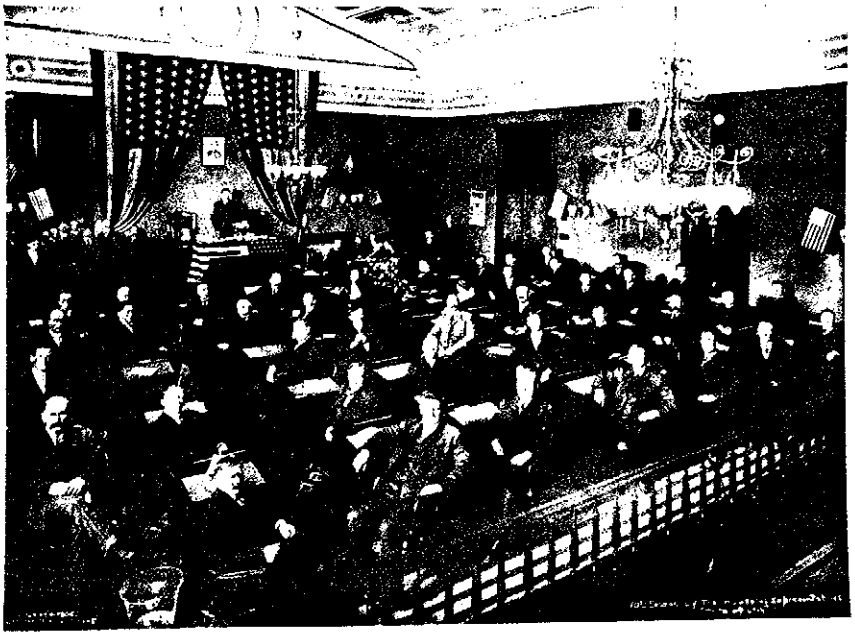

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Old City Hall, Salt Lake City, Utah, 1862